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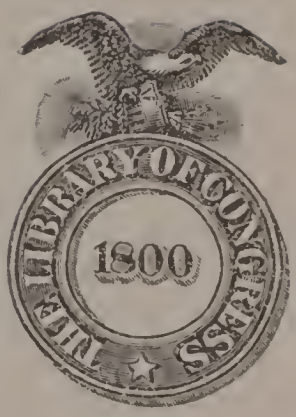

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DOCTOR HELEN RAND.

Doctor Helen Rand.

BY

LOIS WRIGHT, A. M., M. D.

"A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive."
Coleridge.

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"TAKE heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."—*Jesus.*

"JUSTICE is like the Kingdom of God—it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning."—*George Eliot.*

In the name of Justice to Children these pages are dedicated to woman's truest friend—the woman physician.

The Author.

CHAPTER I.

DR. HELEN RAND was sitting at her desk in her pleasant little office on Fourth street late one afternoon in July. An open letter lay before her which she had just finished reading for the second time. The letter had arrived the morning before, and had lain open, where she could see it whenever her work brought her to her desk. She smiled contentedly, folded the letter and bowed her head upon her hand. The day had been oppressively warm; she had been at work since morning and was tired.

"Dear Jack," she murmured, "he hasn't changed a particle. His letter is just like his old, jolly, good-hearted self; and he always speaks so tenderly of mother," she added gently. The letter ran thus:

"DEAR SIS:—If all is well I shall see you by July 12th. How strange it will seem to be in C. again after all these years; and you a doctor, good gracious! But do, I beg of you, lay your rheumatic old women and teething babies

away in flannel for a few days and give me a chance to talk you to death. Ah, dear sister, I have been willful I know, but it chokes me to think that the mother will not be there. But we must not look backward—that is bad philosophy. Only a few days, my learned doctor, and I am with you.

Your devoted brother, JACK."

The letter was a long one for Jack. Her thoughts flew back to the day she last saw him. They had been always the best of friends and when he made up his mind to leave home he had sworn her to secrecy and told her his determination. She had tried every means in her power to change his decision, but to no purpose. She could not sympathize with him in his reasons for going and was heart-broken at the thought of losing him. Besides, there was the dear mother; she was good and did not deserve such a hard blow.

It was the culmination of years of antagonism between Jack and his father. How well she remembered the scene in the library which was the direct cause of her brother leaving home. The father, cold and unrelenting; the little

mother, inconsolable, dissolved in tears; Jack defiant and rebellious, and she, Helen, simply miserable, uncertain in her own mind where was the right, and sure of only one thing, that they were all wretched. She heard her father say in that icy tone which always froze her heart: "I have decided, my son, and it lies now with you. You are of age. I have done my duty by you faithfully, but to no purpose. You are still defiant. It is not becoming in me to ask why this burden has been laid upon me. God alone knows. Surely I have labored and prayed with you enough to save any soul not hopelessly lost; and now my duty is to my church and to the other members of my family. You have long been sowing seeds of heresy and dissension among the younger members of the church, until the deacons of my own church have felt it their duty to bring it to my notice. I will say nothing of the shame and disgrace you have brought upon me. Having failed in my duty toward you, I must take it as a just punishment from Heaven. The time has come when you must decide between your home and the

wretched doctrines you have picked up, I know not where. My duty to my church makes it imperative that I should insist that you should either become one of us and work with us, or take your own independent course."

Mr. Rand had spoken deliberately and calmly and now sat immovable as a statue, awaiting his son's reply. For a moment nothing broke the stillness but the low, half-suppressed sobs of the mother; then the boy turned upon his father and a torrent of bitter words broke from him:

"It is not true. You have not done your duty by me. What have you ever done to help me to a better life? You have cramped and warped my mind in every way in your power. You made my childhood a nightmare with your doctrines, and now that you can no longer terrify me with them, you would banish me from my home and make my name forever a reproach there. You claim that you act in the service of your God, for His glory. You call me an atheist. If to disbelieve in such a God be an atheist, then you are right. You banish me because I will not believe, you say. Will not?

I cannot! You charge me with corrupting the morals of the young men of the church by my bad example. You are right again, if by bad example you mean that I refuse to be a hypocrite; that I refuse to pretend to believe in the church when I do not; that I refuse to sit in church and listen to what I know is false; and I tell you it is all false, there is no justice, no right in it all. You can't frighten me into believing it. I am proud that I cannot believe it, and will go to the ends of the earth before I will be a hypocrite. I am young and strong and am not afraid. You are my father," said the boy, in a lower and less excited voice, "and I will not, do not blame you in my heart. You think you are doing your duty, but I cannot see it all as you do, and it is better that I go," and he turned and left the room before his astonished auditors fully realized what he had said.

By a strange coincidence, as Dr. Rand's thoughts reached this point in her recollections of her brother, the door opened and the maid announced: "If you please, doctor, a gentle-

man to see you." Helen looked past the girl almost expecting that her brother would follow her without the ceremony of an invitation, but in answer to her involuntary look of expectation the maid said: "He is waiting in the reception room, ma'am." So the doctor rose slowly and walked into the reception with all her professional dignity; she could not be sure that the waiting gentleman was her brother.

A warm grasp of the hand, a formal kiss upon the cheek, and the meeting she had long anticipated was over.

The meeting of intimate friends and near relatives after a long separation is always a sad event; we never meet as we expect we shall. The preservation of ideals, both in regard to ourselves and others, in spite of the evidence of our own senses, is one of the strangest of all psychical phenomena. Jack Rand had pictured to himself many times this meeting with his sister. He imagined himself hurrying up the steps, ringing the bell furiously and rushing in in his old way, finding Helen in the hall or parlor as eager as himself for the first glimpse, and catch-

ing her in his arms, he would shower upon her kisses as in the old days, when he used to tease r by kissing her before the other boys. He always forgot when making these pictures that Heler. was not living in the old home, but in a house of her own. When at last the hour came that he mounted the steps of his sister's trim little house and saw on the door a modest sign bearing the inscription "Dr. Helen Rand," the whole thing seemed so strange to him that he rang the bell very gently, almost timidly, and, when the door was opened, inquired in a tone which was propriety itself: "Is Miss——Dr. Rand at home?" During the moment which had elapsed before Helen entered the thought came to him for the first time that he was not the boy who had left home so many years ago, and that Helen was no longer a young girl with nothing to do but to await his coming. Strange as it may seem, he realized for the first time, that it would have been impossible for him to have rushed into a strange house in the familiar way he had pictured. It was years since he had moved with great alacrity on any occasion. He

grew suddenly concious how corpulent he had grown, and wondered with a shock which was almost electric in its suddenness, if his sister would recognize him. A light step in the hall and Helen entered. His manner was almost embarrassed, as he rose to greet her. There was no likeness to the girl he had pictured, in the woman before him. The dignity and conscious power which appeared in every movement, was a complete disguise for any remnant of the feverish restlessness, which was the one trait in Helen's nature which Jack remembered the best. He left her a timid girl, looking out anxiously over the unknown sea of life and awaiting fearfully what the Fates might have in store for her. He found her a woman, calm, self-possessed, who had learned life's bitterest lessons, and who now watched the shifting seasons with a philosophy unchangeable, because born of her own past. The first interview between the brother and sister might have been a very embarrassing one but that no one felt uncomfortable long in Helen's presence. They were soon chatting pleasantly about his journey,

some features of his life in Australia and about her own work, Jack inquiring in rapid succession of old friends and acquaintances. They were both surprised when dinner was announced. Helen proudly presented her brother to the other members of her household and the conversation became general.

CHAPTER. II.

"NOW, sister mine," said Jack, as they found themselves alone in the library after dinner, "I warn you I shall give you no peace, until I have heard everything that has happened in this dear old crazy town since I left."

"Let me see," said Helen musingly, "fourteen years, is it not, Jack? It doesn't seem possible; and yet the years roll around very quickly when one is busy."

"Yes, and when one is happy, or comparatively so. I assure you, Helen, the first few years I was away took their own time in disappearing. I was desperately homesick and many times discouraged enough to give up, but I knew it was no use coming back here, especially after father and mother died. Helen, you never wrote me the particulars of father's last sickness."

"He never rallied from the shock of mother's death and survived her only two months. The

physicians said it was really a blessing that he went then, as they feared for his reason. You know he was always of a melancholy disposition and he grew much worse after you left."

"Were you with him when he died?"

"Yes, I was with them both when the end came."

Jack walked over to the window and looked out for a moment without speaking. There was a suspicious tremor in his voice as he said: "I suppose they never forgave me for leaving home."

"I think mother did, and I am also quite sure, as I look back, that she had serious doubts before she died of the justice of a religion which separated a family and made so many people unhappy. She said one day in speaking of you: 'Jack was always thoughtful and kind to every one and obedient to me; I am sure he will come out all right. It may be, after all, that his father puts too much importance upon his believing just as we do. If one means to do right, surely the just Father will not condemn him altogether.' Our dear mother's nat-

ural sense of justice and loving heart were always at war with her unjust religion."

"But you, Helen, you did not see it all then as you do now?"

"No, I had no definite ideas on religious subjects. I could not but feel that father's treatment of you was unjust, and still I had such confidence in his honesty and goodness I would not willingly think he could do anything wrong. I had not yet learned that there is no absolute right or wrong, that an action is good or bad according to the sanction of one's own conscience. Father did you a great injustice, but his act was not unjust, because he acted according to the light he had and his conscience approved his deed. I am convinced that he suffered from your leaving home as much if not more than any of us. He never mentioned your name from the day you left, but he grew daily more taciturn and gloomy."

"Well, I have often wondered whether or no I did right in leaving; but it was better that he should mourn my absence than be annoyed constantly by my presence, and I am convinced

that the breech between us would only have widened had I stayed. It is very hard to tell what is best in this troublesome world of ours, but as you say, the only way is to be true to one's own sense of right and manfully bear the results. But tell me of your own life, Helen, since I left. How did you come to study medicine and what did you do with yourself the year after the home was broken up? Your letters were always so unsatisfactory. You talked of everything imaginable except yourself." Helen hesitated a moment before she replied.

"I was only sixteen, you remember, when mother and father died. Father had accumulated nothing, poor man, how could he on the small salary he received, and I had nothing but the few pieces of old furniture which belonged to mother; the rest went with the parsonage and belonged to the church. Ah, Jack, I cannot tell you what a miserable, forlorn creature I was that evening after the funeral. I remember it all as plainly as though it were yesterday. I was sitting in the parlor alone crying quietly, when Mrs. Parsons came in. You remember

her, the wife of the deacon who made the trouble over your infidelity, and began pitying me and calling me poor dear and poor soul and talking about the wisdom of providence, until I thought I should go insane. Finally she ended by offering me a home with her until some of my relatives could come for me, and saying that the new minister and his family would be here in a few weeks, and besides it would not be proper for me to stay in the house alone. It was the first time I had realized that the parsonage was no longer my home and that I really had no place to go when I left it. I thanked her and said I would let her know in the morning, that Aunt Sally, the old woman, who always came in 'to lend a hand' as she said, 'on busy days,' would stay with me that night. She insisted in my going with her immediately and seemed to think me a monster of ingratitude, that I did not jump at the offer. When rid of her, I dried my tears and sat down to think seriously what I would do. As I look back now, I am surprised to remember how coolly I viewed the situation. I decided imme-

diately that I would sooner drown myself than live with the Parsons, and reviewed in my mind the different relatives in whose homes I could perchance make myself useful. Something ruled out each one—you know mother had no near relatives, and father's were all East and most of them like ourselves poor—until I remembered Aunt Hester Pollard's letter, in answer to the one I had written, telling her of father's death. She was sick, she said, and could not come to the funeral, but hoped everything would be properly attended to, and if money was needed to defray expenses, to let her know. She went on then to tell of her own afflictions; how she had been an invalid for years; that with all her money it was impossible to get any one to care properly for her; that she was a miserable, sick old woman and wished she too were dead as well as her brother. It was a selfish querulous letter, all about her own woes, but somehow I was drawn toward her, in her helpless condition, and I said to myself: Here is something I can do and I might as well be in one place as another. Mother always said I was

a natural nurse, and was nowhere so much at home as in a sick room. I sat down with pen and paper and wrote Aunt Hester that I had no home now and if she liked I would come and nurse her, that she needn't keep me if she didn't like me and I would try hard to please her. You know about my going to her and will remember that I staid with her a little over a year."

"Yes," said Jack, who had been listening intently, "and that is about all I do know of that time. Your letters during that year were generally of two or three sentences and ran about thus: 'Aunt Hester is feeling worse today and keeps me busy waiting on her. I have nothing to write because all my days are alike.'"

"The poor soul," said Helen, smiling ruefully, "I could say nothing good of her and didn't want to say anything bad. In all my subsequent practice I never met any one so nervous and cross, and so impossible to please. She lived in a great dark old house on the coast, not far from Boston. The night I arrived the house-

keeper met me at the door and I certainly thought she was going to faint. 'You the new nurse!' she exclaimed contemptuously, 'You can't manage her.' It seems that my aunt had not told her that I was her niece, but simply that I was a nurse. I don't know what her object could have been but one of the first things she said to me was 'Don't tell the servants that you are related to me,' and of course I never did. I remained with her little over a year and for my work received my board, a small salary and the proud distinction of having endured the affliction longer than any other nurse she ever employed. I have never quite satisfied myself in regard to my experience with Aunt Hester, whether it had a good or bad effect upon me. I certainly learned to be forbearing and patient, but I think the same experience later in life would have been less productive of harm. A young girl entirely ignorant of the world is so prone to judge life by her own feelings and by the experience through which she herself is passing at the time, and indeed what other standard has she? So I left Aunt Hester's

with the conviction that this world was a very gloomy world indeed; that people were all selfish and overbearing and the only way to live without being continually racked heart and mind, was to learn not to care; to expect nothing of the world and then one could not be disappointed."

"Not a bad philosophy," said Jack, smiling.

"No, perhaps not, when arrived at from a long acquaintance with the ways of the world, good and bad, and when there is mingled with it large charity and an unbounded hope; but certainly a bad one for a young girl whose horizon of life is bounded by her own narrow experiences and who has learned neither a hope for the morrow nor charity for today. But, dear brother, I expect you are tired from your journey and would rather be asleep than listening to moralizing."

"No, indeed; you stopped your story in the most interesting part. What did you do when you left Aunt Hester?"

Helen hesitated a moment as if in doubt just how to answer. "You know it is a long story

from that day to this;" then rapidly as if to get over a disagreeable subject: "The year following I did general nursing in Boston. A nephew of Aunt Hester's husband was studying medicine in the city and found me plenty of work. It was also through his advice and help that I began the study of medicine the following year with the money I had been able to save while nursing. After I graduated I came back immediately to my old home, as you know, and contrary to all the wise-acres, have built up a splendid practice, and have no longer any need to count the pennies, or to eat the bread of dependence. And that, my dear brother, is the thrilling story of Dr. Rand to date, and now to sleep. I shall talk to you no longer to-night."

But Jack did not respond to Helen's light pleasantry.

"Helen," he said, "when I think of all you and I have suffered for the want of a little money when we first started in life, it almost makes me hate my money now. It seems so unjust that one should actually suffer for food, as I did many times in those early years, and

then be showered with five times more than one wants or knows what to do with."

"Yes," said Helen thoughtfully, "it does seem so at first. But if the bitter experience of early life, even in regard to money, makes us better appreciate its real uses, and better able to handle it for the general good we are fortunate, rather than otherwise to have had them. I can assure you, you will find plenty of uses for your fortune in this woe-besieged city. I feel that I could use many times the amount at my disposal to help in the good works, in the hands of honest trustworthy people."

"Well, Helen, I shall be only too glad if you will take charge of a portion of mine; all I care is that it is well spent. You will think me insatiable; but who is the young lady I met at the dinner table, and that beautiful boy—where did you find him?"

"The lady is Dr. Kate Summerville. You will meet her again; we live together. The child is one I have brought up from infancy."

"By Jove, Helen, you made a good choice;

such a manly, handsome little fellow one rarely sees. We will be good friends, I know. I am very fond of children."

"He is a very good boy; and now good-night, brother; you should have pleasant dreams the first night in so many years in your native land."

"And in such a fairy castle as this, surely there can be no bad dreams here," answered her brother as he kissed her tenderly good-night.

CHAPTER III.

IT WAS a merry little company that assembled around Dr. Helen's daintily set breakfast table the following morning. The brother and sister had returned very naturally into the old-time relations, and Helen's companion, Dr. Sommerville, entered as heartily into the joy of her friend as though it were her own. The gentle-boy, who sat at Helen's right hand and watched her every movement, completed the pleasant picture. Everything showed a taste and refinement very soothing to a man who is naturally fond of the comforts of a well-regulated home and who has been deprived of them for years, and Jack was in the best of spirits.

Dr. Kate, too, was in an unusually agreeable mood, and before the morning meal was over she and Jack were the best of friends. It was one of Kate's favorite theories, that every one is surrounded by an atmosphere peculiar to himself, which is purely chemical and that these magnetic currents act and re-act on each other

according to laws entirely beyond our control.

"I see no other way to explain the effect different people have upon me," she once said to Helen. "The very sight of some people makes me nervous before they say a word and it is impossible for me to be natural when with them; my ideas all stop, refuse utterly to come to the surface and I feel and act like an idiot. While the presence of others is like a draught of champagne and stirs up all the wits I possess." It was evident that Helen's guest belonged to the latter class for Kate was at her best this morning.

"It seems to me," said Jack, sipping his coffee slowly to enjoy more fully the delicious beverage, "that you ladies are overturning all the old proverbs in regard to women. You know we men have been taught for centuries that women cannot live together in peace and that professional women cannot make a home."

"I can imagine," said Kate, "that it must be very shocking to the masculine mind to see women living together without quarreling. It destroys one of their most convincing argu-

ments to induce women to live with them; for even the most strong-minded of us are women still and cannot live without companionship."

"Then, too, I suppose physicians are different from other women," said Jack, tentatively, ready to retreat if this proposition was not favorably received.

"Oh, yes," said Kate, "we are very different indeed. At least I should hope so. It would be a poor return for all our hard work if we come out of the mill just like other women; not so, Helen?"

Helen laughed softly and finished pouring Jack's third cup of coffee.

"Spare my brother, Kate, until he shall know us better; I think professional women are much like other women. I claim for them only the superiority which comes from a larger knowledge of life and life's meaning. I think brother is right in that our peculiar training makes it possible for us to live together and grow in sympathy where it might not be possible for women who take a narrower view of life. The little things which in daily life are apt to pro-

duce discord and which to other women are too often their sole interests, are to us only the incidentals and play no part in the grand total by which we judge each other."

"In other words," said Kate, maliciously, "we of the medical profession have learned to take the 'characteristic symptoms' only in judging our friends." Helen joined in the laugh at her expense which greeted Kate's home thrust, and Jack said:

"You will excuse me; but I must say it is especially hard for me to understand how you ladies can work together in harmony and belong to opposite schools."

"Our amiability," said Kate, "is all due to our ignorance. We have discovered by comparing notes that neither of us know enough to quarrel over. After long and exhaustive discussions we found that our education in all branches of medicine had been the same with the exception of therapeutics, and we effected a compromise on that point. Helen acknowledged that my drugs did not always kill and that her's did not always cure, and upon that we raised the flag of truce."

"But did Helen not require any concessions from you?"

"Oh, yes, I admitted that little pills in the hands of an all-wise Providence might be the means of effecting a cure, although I cannot understand the process."

"This generous admission on your part must be entirely satisfactory to Helen."

No one enjoyed more than Helen Kate's raillery at her pet theories. "I do not think," added Kate, "that Helen deserves as much credit for her tolerant spirit as I do; for I am sure she has always had a lingering hope of converting me, and I have never for a moment indulged in any such illusions. But, seriously, it is my opinion that any two honest physicians may meet as friends on a common ground in discussing what they don't know."

"It is very refreshing to the laity," sighed Jack, contentedly, "to hear such confessions from the learned doctors themselves. We have been bled and blistered by one set of medical men only to be told by another that we have to thank Providence for coming out alive. We

accordingly put our faith in these new prophets who have given us this valuable information, and are horrified to learn from the orthodox medical men that we are worshiping false prophets. Pray, what are we, the uninitiated, to believe?"

"Why, nothing, of course. We don't expect you really to believe anything we say; but there is a certain amount of professional dignity which we are obliged to sustain, and we have found no better way as yet than to contradict each other. And now, my dear doctor, I shall be obliged to leave you and Mr. Rand to visit in peace, as it is half after eight and I am due at the office at nine," and Kate hurried off with a cheery good morning to all and a special word for little Paul, who considered "Aunt Kate" quite as perfect as it was desirable an aunt should be.

CHAPTER IV.

"AH, DR. SOMMERVILLE," said Jack, as he overtook Kate one morning some weeks later on her way to her office, "you seem in a hurry this morning?"

"No," said Kate, "this is my usual walk. I never could bear to crawl along as most women do. It is not considered feminine I know for a woman to walk as if she were really going anywhere, but as it greatly aids my digestion I persist in doing so, old lady Grundy to the contrary, notwithstanding."

"Well, for my part," said Jack, "I like to see a woman strong and healthy and act as if she were alive. You say it is not considered feminine; I cannot see why women have allowed themselves to be burdened by all these superstitions for so many years, for even you, Dr. Kate, must acknowledge that women are very stupid in regard to preserving their health."

"Yes," said Kate, sharply, "and why shouldn't they be stupid? They have been taught for

centuries solely by men and what do men know of women? They have been taught that it was a fine thing to be sickly and weak, that to have a chronic headache and backache was really a mark of distinction, and all because you men want to keep women dependent on you. You don't want them to be strong either mentally or physically for fear they will lose their desire to be clinging vines and want to taste for themselves the rich wine of independence;" and the orator flashed on Jack one of those brilliant smiles which always made his head reel.

"I must say," said Jack, grasping after the first thought which presented itself, "I think you are very unjust to the men. I never heard a man say that he admired a weak, sickly woman."

"No, I dare say not, and that is just the worst part of it; you don't admire inferior women, but you are afraid to make them your equals. You haven't the moral courage to teach women to be what you would really like them to be, if you were not afraid of their getting away from

you. A fashionable woman with brains said to me a few evenings ago: 'I assure you, doctor, men admire brainy women, but they are afraid of them and dare not encourage them.' But here is my office, Mr. Rand, and I must bid you good morning. Whenever you get 'blind as to your eyes,' as the Latin grammar says, come in between ten and one and I will give you the best of service and ten per cent discount on your bill, on account of your connection with the profession," and with a merry bow Kate ran up a flight of stone steps which led to one of the most elegantly-appointed office buildings in the city.

Jack walked on aimlessly.

She might have invited him in just for a moment, he thought. He would like to see what a lady's down-town office was like. But no, she had left him, with that air that told plainly that he would not enter her thoughts again until they happened to meet. He was not used to this sort of treatment and it irritated him. All the women he had ever met, he said to himself, his sister Helen included, seemed to make

an effort to be agreeable to him and to win his good opinion. But this young woman seemed to improve every opportunity to be disagreeable, and was as careless of his opinion, good or bad, as if he had been a talking-machine or only half-witted. He became so irritated at her and at himself for caring how she treated him, that he walked on rapidly, not noticing where his steps were taking him until he was stopped suddenly by a hand grasping his and a jolly voice saying:

"Hello, Rand, what's up? Why this haste? Never saw you go so fast as this in Australia, and looking like a thunder cloud, too."

"Morton, old fellow, delighted to see you; hadn't the slightest idea you were in C. When did you alight?"

"Last evening, only, and I took the first opportunity to hunt you up. You didn't write me as you promised, and I didn't know your address, but got on track of you at the club, and was still pursuing the trail when I fortunately ran against you."

"It is well we met because I am at present

at my sister's house and she didn't know where I was going—in fact, I didn't myself—and her house is full of the maimed, halt and blind until noon and she cannot receive social calls during office hours."

"Well, where are you bound for, if I may ask?"

"Only out for a ramble."

"Then," said Morton, slipping his arm through Jack's, "what do you say to a stroll through the park? I have much to say to you." The young men walked on, talking rapidly, Jack asking questions in quick succession about all the friends, business and social, in Australia, which his friend had lately quitted.

"And now," said Morton, after nearly an hour's conversation, "it is my turn to ask questions. What have you done with yourself the two months you have been in this rushing, roaring, crazy city and why have you not written me?"

"To both questions, I can only answer: I don't know. Has it been two months? It doesn't seem two weeks."

Morton gave a long, low whistle. "That sounds suspicious, to say the least. You must have been very agreeably occupied. Met an old sweetheart, or have you fallen in love at first sight?"

Jack laughed good-humoredly. "I had not thought of a woman in connection with my stay here until you spoke; but if there is a woman in the case it is quite the opposite of your surmises. If I have been doing anything in that line, it has been a study in a light way of the most aggravating bit of womanhood that ever came to my notice."

"This is certainly interesting. Tell me about her and let me help in this anthropological study."

They had seated themselves on a settee in the shade of a beautiful clump of trees, overlooking a small lake. Jack stopped and picked up a handful of pebbles before answering and began skimming them over the water.

"If you expect me to describe the bundle of inconsistencies referred to, I warn you to be prepared for disappointment. However, I can

make an attempt, to please you. It is,——she is——a physician."

"The dickens!" exclaimed his friend. "A woman doctor! What under the sun can you find to interest you in a woman doctor?"

"Did you ever meet one?" asked Jack quietly.

"Why yes, certainly, there was one in Australia, a very nice old lady; took care of the women and children and had the reputation of being a good nurse, too. They are all alike, I am told."

Jack smiled: "Am afraid, my boy, you have been misinformed. The lady of whom I speak is no nurse, she is a thoroughly educated physician, is young and——unmarried."

"Not married and practicing medicine! I must say, Rand, I am rather astonished at you. You were always so particular of your lady friends. I understand that it is not considered proper for an unmarried woman to practice medicine."

Jack was wondering why he was beginning to be annoyed at his friend.

"You remember," he said, quietly, "that my sister is a physician and unmarried."

"Oh, I beg pardon," said Morton, really annoyed at his blunder, "I didn't mean it exactly in that way, you know, and then I suppose your sister is an elderly woman."

Jack could not refrain a smile. "My sister is thirty-one and has been practicing eight years."

Morton noticed a slight tone of annoyance in his friend's answer and hastened to say: "Well, you see, Rand, how little I know of women; and whatever your sister's work may be, I am sure she is good and true or she wouldn't have sprung from the same stock as my friend here," and he laid his hand affectionately on Jack's shoulder. Both laughed good-naturedly at the compliment and harmony was restored, but when Morton essayed to bring the conversation around to the young woman who started it, Jack deftly turned the subject. Somehow he wasn't in a humor to speak of her. When the young men parted, after a dinner at the club, which only club-men know how to order, Jack said: "My sister has insisted upon my remain-

ing at her house and I will send you an invitation by the morning mail for tomorrow evening, if Helen has no previous engagement, and perhaps you will meet the young lady I have not described to you," and with a hearty laugh the friends parted.

CHAPTER V.

THE following evening Morton arrayed himself in his most faultless attire and started as soon as propriety would allow to fulfill his engagement with Jack Rand at his sister's house.

He had thought over his conversation with his friend several times during the day and by evening his curiosity was at fever heat. To see two real live women physicians, not mid-wives nor nurses, but *bone fide* doctors, was to be an era in his existence. He had heard that there were such abnormal specimens of womanhood abroad in the land, but had never had any curiosity to see them, avoiding them as he would any monstrosities shocking to the sensibilities.

When the ladies rose to greet him on his entrance into Dr. Helen's tastefully furnished parlors, he was obliged to bring to bear all his tact to conceal his astonishment at the appearance of the ladies. Two beautiful young women, dressed in the prevailing mode, receiv-

ing him with all the grace and dignity of society women—he could not understand it, and was inclined to think at first that his old friend had played a practical joke upon him, and after a few moments conversation forgot entirely that they were physicians and was exerting himself to the utmost to make a good impression.

"My brother has been telling us something of your life in Australia and what a good friend you have been to him, and I assure you it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to my home," said Dr. Helen in that sweet, gracious way which was all her own and which made every one feel at home immediately.

"You are very kind, Miss Rand, but your brother has always over-valued the little assistance I was fortunate enough to be able to offer him when he first arrived in Australia, and I feel guilty at accepting so much more praise than I deserve."

"Now, Morton," said his friend, "don't be so modest; and besides I have only told the ladies that you are generous to a fault and would ruin yourself to help a friend."

"Faint praise truly and all undeserved; but tell me, Miss Rand, if I may be so bold as to ask, what have you been doing with my old chum since he has been with you? He tells me that the two months in your city seem to him no more than two weeks."

"Well, I am sure I don't know," laughed Helen, "unless he has enjoyed quarreling with Dr. Summerville; whenever I have seen him lately he has been so engaged."

"Really, Dr. Rand," expostulated the young lady referred to, "I think that altogether too strong a statement. Mr. Rand and I agree beautifully———on the weather."

Every one laughed, and Jack said, gloomily:

"I believe that is the only subject we have been able to discuss amicably."

"I think I can guess one of your points of dispute," said Morton, "as I have argued myself long and loud with my friend, he is such a wretched heretic."

"Yes," said Kate, "we argue most bitterly on that subject, because it is the one question on which we best agree. I have noticed that the

fewer the points of difference between two creeds the more tenacious the followers of each hold to those points."

"Then I take it that you are not quite as bad a heretic as my friend."

"I do not consider one's religious belief a matter of much importance," replied Kate, "so long as he accords to others the same privilege he takes himself, that of believing what he pleases. It is the spirit of bigotry and intolerance, which, as far as I have been able to observe, is a part of all organized religious beliefs, which does the mischief. If, for instance, St. Paul had followed his proclamation in regard to woman: 'Let your women keep silence in the churches'—'I suffer not a woman to teach'—with the modest remark: 'This is my opinion, I may be wrong, you are all at liberty to use your own reasoning on the subject,' do you suppose woman would be in the position she is today? But when that learned gentleman followed his tirade in regard to women, with the diabolical wish that all who disagreed with him might be cut off, his devoted followers have

accepted, not only his reasoning, but his intolerant spirit, also, and have proceeded ever since to 'cut off' to the best of their ability, all those who have disagreed with them."

"Then you do not believe," said Morton, "that a man's religious belief necessarily determines his character?"

"No," said Kate, emphatically, "I do not. A man's religion is a joint product of his heart and brain, and all religious dogmas can be construed in a number of different ways. Witness for instance the different religions and sects built upon the Christian Bible. I have good friends and enthusiastic fellow-workers in the suffrage cause who believe, and I must give them credit for being honest, that St. Paul was an inspired writer. Of course I don't pretend to understand by what process of mental gymnastics they prove St. Paul to have taught woman's suffrage, but when I find them espousing both the teachings of St. Paul and woman's claim to the ballot, I must give them credit for being able in their own minds to reconcile the two. And, indeed, the mental process required

to accomplish this feat cannot be more severe than that which proves the Christian Bible to teach at the same time polygamy, monogamy and celibacy. No, I think it beyond dispute that a man's character forms his religion, not his religion his character, and that a just man will have a just religion and an unjust man an unjust religion and both may be evolved from the same source."

"But, Dr. Kate," said Jack, "I have heard you say that the orthodox religions were largely responsible for the wrongs women have suffered these many years."

"Not the religions themselves, but the intolerant spirit of the believers. A man may pursuade himself to believe that black is white, but so long as he uses no force to compel others to believe as he does, his belief harms no one, and he can even work in harmony with those not under the same delusion as himself. In a word, if a man is truly broad, truly liberal, his individual opinions on any subject can do no radical harm. By liberal I do not mean those who are found in the so-called liberal

churches, but those who honestly believe in the divine right of every man to believe as he pleases,or rather, as he can."

"There is a good deal of truth in what you say," said Morton, thoughtfully. "I have often thought that we find almost as much intolerance in the so-called liberal churches as in the strictly orthodox ones. I have heard as bitter denunciations of orthodoxy from the liberal preachers as ever were pronounced against liberalism from the orthodox pulpits."

"That is the principal reason," said Helen, who had been listening quietly, "why I am attracted to the Ethical Society, and particularly to our lecturer here. Prof. Latimer never denounces any religion. He looks upon the principles of the ethical religion as an evolution from the old religions, and takes the ground that it is just as unbecoming in us to ridicule the religions of the past as it would be to revile our ancestors because they did not know the uses of steam and electricity."

"Well," said Jack, "you are all very charitable, but I believe I am one of the illiberal

liberals, aforesaid. For my part I can not understand how any grown person, in this century or any other could believe the childish tales upon which all the orthodox religions are founded, for the same story runs through them all. Confucius, Buddha, Christ and Mohamet were all made central figures of the veriest fairy-tales, and to my mind no miracle attributed to any of them equals the miracle, which is daily presented to our eyes, of intelligent people believing these stories."

The conversation was interrupted at this point by the entrance of Professor Latimer, who changed its course by explaining to Helen his errand. The board of the Ethical Society had decided to add two women to their number and had asked the Professor to invite Dr. Rand to be one of them.

"I am sure," said Helen, "I consider it a great compliment and if I can really be of use there, will be only too glad to accept."

"The board evidently think so," said Phillip, smiling, "or they would not have agreed unanimously on your name."

Helen laughed in a pleased way at this delicate compliment, and there was a suspicion among the other members of the little company that her selection was meant as a compliment to another, as well as to herself.

Phillip succeeded in drawing Helen apart for a few moments to discuss the merits of the advanced step which the society had taken, and Kate was really making herself agreeable discussing foreign travel with the gentlemen over some fine photographs she had selected with great care.

"Is it possible," said Mortimer to Phillip Latimer, when the conversation became general, "that your society is only now for the first time placing women on the board of management? I had supposed woman's equality part of your tenets."

"I am sorry to say" answered Phillip, "that such is not the case; unfortunately freeing a man's mind from one superstition does not free it from all, and I am bound to confess that until quite recently the majority in our society has been opposed to admitting women to our coun-

sels. Strange to say, this conservatism seems now to have been largely a question of policy, as of late a number of the leaders, who were supposed to be strongly opposed to the admission of women on the board, have announced themselves as always in favor of it, but thought it unwise to join one unpopular movement to another, and for that reason alone have counseled against it."

"With all respect to your society, Professor Latimer," said Jack, "it seems to me a strange sight to see a body of men brave enough to defy public opinion at its most vulnerable point and weak enough to compromise with their consciences on a minor point."

"If you will pardon me—just a word. I think there is a good deal of allowance to be made for my fellow-workers, even those who for policy sake have done an unintentional wrong to the women members of the society."

"In the first place the subject does not present itself to their minds as it does to yours and, indeed, I may say to my own. To them the woman question is a separate one, a distinct

cause to be worked out on its own line, not as to you and to me, an ethical question, which we are in duty bound to solve as well as questions of personal morality and responsibility. They do not look upon it as a question of justice, but one of expediency, and therefore not strictly in the province of an ethical society.

"Viewing it from this light, it seems to me that their position was really justifiable; and if you could know, Mr. Rand, what up-hill work it has been to bring the society to its present position, I am sure you would pardon what may seem to you a little worldly conservation on the part of our members. You must remember when the society was first organized, nearly eight years ago, that to be an avowed woman suffragist was an entirely different thing from what it is today. Now it is a popular movement. A man is almost ashamed to confess himself opposed to it, whatever may be his real opinion.

"The leading minds among both men and women all over the world are writing and speaking in favor of it. But even eight and ten

years ago presented quite the opposite picture; and if at that time any small body of people had attempted to add woman's suffrage to any unpopular religious cause, I rather fear that the pressure of public opinion would have been too strong for so weak a plant. On the other hand our position on this question has cost us some good workers," and he looked at Dr. Summerville with a meaning smile.

I have no religion," answered Kate, "but the good and advancement of my own sex. I am a heathen, pure and simple, because I cannot reconcile any existing religion with the best good of women. Could I but see my sex emancipated before I die, emancipated morally, physically, financially and politically, I would take my chances in the other world with all the heathens who have lived and worked in the cause of an oppressed class. I am free to confess, now that Professor Latimer has brought up the subject, that I was greatly disappointed at seeing a new religious organization formed without recognizing the equality of woman, and it only strengthened my former determination

to belong to no religious organization. Woman will never owe her freedom and independence, if it ever comes, to any church or creed."

"It seems to me," said Helen, "that my friend Dr. Summerville is almost too exacting in her zeal for our cause. I think it perfectly legitimate to enter a society where we can sympathize with the principle for which the society was formed, even if there is a difference of opinion on other points."

"But you forget, my dear doctor," said Kate, with an oratorical flourish, "that I am not a moral culturist but a heathen."

Everybody laughed and Morton said, gallantly: "You will pardon me if I remark that you are the most enlightened heathen I have ever had the pleasure of meeting."

"And the most charming," ventured Jack.

Kate shot a look of pretended displeasure at both.

"As heathens have no particular reputation in either direction I cannot feel under any obligation to the gentlemen," she said, addressing the company in general.

This little personal episode broke the current of the conversation. Phillip looked at his watch and exclaimed at the lateness of the hour.

The gentlemen all rose and, after a few minutes' quiet conversation between the Professor and Helen and a good deal of sharp-shooting between Dr. Kate and Jack Rand, bowed themselves out.

As the two friends returned into the parlor, Helen rushed up to Kate and gave her a hearty kiss. "There," she said, in a triumphant tone, "didn't I tell you I would convert them."

"Why, yes, bless your dear heart, and I never doubted it for an instant. You could gather figs of thistles, the old proverb to the contrary, notwithstanding. I congratulate you with all my heart, although they are much more to be congratulated that they are to have the benefit of your clear judgment and exquisite sense of justice."

"Kate, dear, you over-estimate my virtues in every particular. You will wish you hadn't when I get so conceited that you cannot live with me."

"If I could only get a little conceit into you, Helen, I should think I had done a grand work; it would be your salvation," and Kate bade her friend a merry good night.

CHAPEER VI.

WHEN Jack and his friend left Phillip Latimer at the street corner, where their ways divided, they strolled on arm in arm for several moments in silence.

Morton was evidently thinking seriously on some subject, and it was so unusual for him to think seriously, that even the irreverent Jack respected his silence for a short time. At last he could repress his desire to know Morton's state of mind no longer, and shook him gently by the arm:

"Hello, old fellow, wake up! Hope you are not stunned beyond recovery. What do you think of her?"

Morton laughed. "How do you know I was thinking of her, at all?"

"Oh, come now, don't play off; and besides didn't you promise to help me solve the enigma if I would take you to see her? She is the sphinx, you know."

"To be sure, I had forgotten. But to be can-

did with you, Rand, I was congratulating myself that I was not in love with her."

Jack started at this unexpected answer and said a little nervously:

"Why, may I ask?"

"Well, firstly, as the ministers say, I think it would be decidedly difficult for a man to persuade her that he was necessary to her happiness; and secondly, I very much fear that if he should succeed in doing so he would regret it himself later. Seriously, Rand, these brainy women are all very well just where she is, in a profession, or out in public life, seeking to help her own sex; but in a home a man wants a woman who is more pliable, and who hasn't such decided opinions. A man likes to have a hand in forming the opinions of his wife; he doesn't want her ideas all cut and dried before he meets her."

"Exactly what she said to me a few evenings ago," remarked Jack.

"What she said to you? Impossible! How can a woman know how men feel about such things?"

"Probably some cynic like yourself has been instructing her," said Jack dryly.

They were used to bantering back and forth and Morton took no offense at the remark, but he was not to be laughed out of his argument.

"That just proves now what I was saying. These confoundedly clever women, who can pick a man to pieces and analyze him as if he were a jelly fish, must be extremely disagreeable to live with. The best of us have our failings; we don't pretend to be angels and it is impossible to live happily with a woman who knows everything."

"I don't deny that I enjoy talking with a woman with ideas occasionally; but for a steady, every-day thing I confess I haven't the courage to choose one of your so-called intellectual women."

"I must say, Morton," answered the gallant Jack, warming up to the subject, "that I can't but think your opinions the result of ignorance. You confessed to me yesterday that you had met very few women of that order. Now I have seen the ladies you met tonight daily for

nearly two months and they live together in perfect harmony, and differ on many subjects. They don't pick each other to pieces just to see how disagreeable they can be."

"Oh, well, that is very different. Women don't expect as much of each other as they do of us. It is natural for a woman to be suspicious and jealous of a man, and it is that which makes it so difficult for a man and a woman to live peacefully together."

"Ah, I see. You are really enlightning me, Morton. I have always been told that it was the women who found it so difficult to live together in peace."

"Come now, Rand, I'm not going to quarrel with you over a woman. I've no doubt she is charming; and if a man is brave enough to risk the consequences, I'll not deny that it's a thing to be proud of to be able to win such a woman. It is evident that it is dangerous for a man to put himself in their power. I suppose they have reformed you completely, and converted you to woman's rights and all that sort of thing."

"I'm not so sure of that; but, confound it! they put it to you in a way you can't answer. I never could quite believe in women going to the polls along with a disorderly lot of men; but when a woman who owns property asks you point-blank why it was tyranny for men to be taxed without representation a hundred years ago, and not tyranny today to tax women without giving them a representation in the government, what are you going to answer?'"

"Tell them that the law supposes that their husbands or fathers look after their interests in that line."

"But suppose a woman is not married and has no father living?"

"Then a brother or son must represent her."

"So I said to Dr. Summerville the last time we argued on this subject, but she coolly informed me that she possessed none of those interesting relations, and still the law compelled her to pay hundreds of dollars yearly in taxes. She is quite wealthy in her own right."

"Ah, Indeed!" remarked Morton meditatively.

We would be loath to do the gentleman any injustice, but a golden glitter thrown upon a doubtful social problem, like the blessed sunshine in nature, dispels many a cloud and clears the brain of many a dusty cobweb.

"I am willing to admit," continued Morton, magnanimously, "that it puts the thing in a different light where an unmarried woman owns property. In that case it goes without saying that she, and consequently the property, is not represented. But, you see, where a woman is married her husband represents her directly. I tell you it would never do to acknowledge that a married woman's property interests are not identical with her husband's."

"Then you would be in favor of giving the right of suffrage to widows and old maids?" said Jack, quizzically.

"Well, I did not say that exactly. How you pick a fellow up, Rand."

Morton was slightly annoyed at the conclusion to which his admission forced him.

"I don't know as I think they should actually go to the polls and vote; there are other ways

in which they could be represented. I must say that I think you force me to appear in a wrong light. You talk as if you thought I was not willing to give the women a fair chance in the world. This is not true, but I can't see that throwing the women into the present political maelstrom would benefit either them or us."

"Morton, old fellow, if I have not been fair in argument, I honestly beg your pardon; I only meant to draw you out. As for myself I don't know what I do think on the woman question. I have about made up my mind that it is a problem not to be solved by us men, and the brilliant thought has occurred to me that, so long as we find it such a hard nut to crack, why not give the women a chance to solve it for themselves? It would at least satisfy them and if they made a failure of it they could not blame us, which would be an immense advantage on our side."

Morton laughed heartily. They had reached the hotel and stood under the great electric lights.

"Well, at least we can leave it there for the

present. We can't stand here discussing woman's rights at this time of night; we would be locked up as escaped lunatics by your zealous guardians of the peace. When am I to see you again? I leave day after tomorrow. I am afraid we shall not have time to settle the woman question."

Jack laughed good-humoredly at the nome thrust, and after making an appointment with his friend for the morrow, jumped into a cab and drove back to his sister's house.

Somehow it was a pleasant thought that there was a home in the great city where he was always welcome.

CHAPTER VII.

THE days flew by scarcely noticed in their flight by the busy members of the little household on Fourth Street. Jack was engaged in transferring his financial interests to the city, where his sister had made her home. He felt it both a duty and a pleasure to make her home his own.

Helen and Kate, in their ceaseless round of professional duties and work for others, gave no heed to the fact that the summer was gone. Heat and cold bring no changes to those whose work knows no season. At the close of a short day in the early month of autumn, the two friends sat in Dr. Helen's inner office, the *sanctum sanctorum*, as Kate called it, after their early dinner; Helen looking over some papers and Kate lying on her favorite settee thinking hard on some of her pet schemes. Suddenly she noticed that Helen was not at her desk, and looking around saw her standing at the long window partly hidden by the drapery, and peering out into the dark.

"For mercy's sake, Helen," she exclaimed, "how you frightened me! I didn't hear you move and thought for a moment you had simply melted away into luminiferous ether. If you keep getting paler and thinner it would not be surprising if you did."

Still no sound from the figure at the window, and Kate hurried over to her, really frightened at the long silence. She passed her arm caressingly around her and spoke in a low, soft voice which would have thrilled Jack Rand, could he have heard it:

"You are very sad tonight, dear. What is it—can I help you? I have been dreadfully worried about you for several weeks. You are not well—you are overworking—they will kill you at that wretched hospital. I shall insist on their furnishing you more assistants."

"Oh, Kate," almost sobbed her friend, "it is not the hospital, but it has come at last what I have been so dreading."

"For heaven's sake, Helen, what has come? Tell me quickly and let me help you—I can make it all right, I know?"

"Ah, Kate, if only I had your confidence in being able to manage fate," said Helen, sadly, but with a smile at her friend's ready promise; "but sit down, dear, and I will tell you. You must know, of course, and you will help me."

She walked to her desk, took from it a letter written upon heavy linen paper and handed it to Kate.

It ran thus:

"*Dr. Helen Rand:*—DEAR FRIEND: Our long and intimate friendship will have prepared you in a measure, I am sure, for the contents of this letter. You know how I value your friendship and all which that means to me. Your confidence in me and appreciation of my work has been to me the greatest inspiration a man could have. I am grateful to you for all you have been to me, but Helen, I want more—I want you to be my wife. It is unnecessary for me to tell you that in asking you to be my wife I do not expect that you will sacrifice, in any particular, your own individuality, nor do I for one moment wish to interfere in your work in any way. I ask only that we may each do our work side by side, that I may have every moment your sweet sympathy and that my work

may have the benefit of your clear thought and judgment. I do not need to say more to you, dear friend; we have talked so often on all these subjects that it would be presumption on my part to explain to you what your own true heart knows full well. I know what I am asking, Helen, and prefer to write you. Will you send me a line saying I may come to you?

Always your friend,

PHILLIP LATIMER."

"Well, Helen, dear, I don't see anything about that to mourn over. It is a manly, sensible letter, I must say, but if you don't love him and don't want to marry him I am sure you needn't grieve so about telling him. You are always over-sensitive about hurting others. It will be hard for him, poor fellow, I am sorry for him; but it is time men learned that women with brains enough to do anything else don't care about spending their entire time waiting on them, and being tormented with their numerous shortcomings, although I must say, as men go, I think Phillip Latimer quite respectable."

"But, Kate!" murmured Helen, as her friend stopped to take breath and there was an omin-

ous silence. Kate jumped to her feet as if from an electric shock.

"Helen Rand, do you love him and do you want to marry him?"

Helen rose and drew her gently down by her side.

"Kate, dear, I do love him."

"Oh, how blind I have been; how conceited I am. I have been fancying all this time that my love was all you wanted, all you needed. Because I find in you all the companionship I crave, I have blindly thought my love could satisfy you. What a fool I have been!"

"Hush, Kate, do not talk so, I beg of you; I never loved you more dearly than at this moment; I never needed you more sorely."

"Forgive me, Helen, and tell me how I can help you."

"I feel, Kate, that I am about to test your friendship truly. I cannot see Phillip Latimer again until he knows my whole history and I want you to tell him."

For once Dr. Kate Summerville had no

answer ready. She looked at her friend in a blank, dazed way, and said slowly:

"Helen Rand, you don't mean it—I cannot do it."

"Kate, listen to me. I know what you would say, and I have thought of it day and night for weeks, and have made up my mind; he must know or I can never see him again."

Kate rose hastily and began pacing the small room like a caged lion.

"Helen, will he send some one to you to tell you his past life? Do you suppose for one instant that you know all the details of his history? What business is it of his by what steps you have reached the position in which he finds you? You bring to him a heart pure as an angel's from heaven, and by what moral law are you compelled to describe to him the fires by which this heart was made pure? He recognizes in you a spirit which has conquered and must you open again the cruel wounds received in the bitter struggle which led to victory? Who asks of the conqueror the number of his wounds?

No, Helen, you are wrong; it is not your duty to tell and I cannot do it."

"Kate, dear, I acknowledge the truth of all you say and if it were in regard to some one else would, I am sure, counsel the same. But when one feels within the impulse to do a thing as strongly as I feel this, it preludes all argument, it must be done. There will be no peace for me until he knows."

"Helen Rand, do you expect me to go to any man on earth and tell him that which in his blind judgment may make you unworthy of him; tell him there is a reason for his refusing to marry you, when you know that I don't think the man lives worthy to touch the hem of your garment? Why do you ask me to do this?"

"Because, Kate, you are my friend; because I can trust you to tell him as he should be told, and because I—do—not—wish—to write it."

The hesitating tone of the last few words and all that it implied, the tired, weary look in the face of her friend, was too much for the noble girl; she threw her arms around Helen impulsively and said in a choked voice:

"Say no more, Helen, I will go, but much less cheerfully than I would walk to the executioner's block, if that would serve you. When shall I go?"

"Tonight, if you will." Helen drew her friend to her. "Oh, Kate, what a priceless blessing I have in your love!"

CHAPTER VIII.

PROFESSOR PHILLIP LATIMER was seated in his private study, all unmindful of the fateful messenger hurrying toward him in the darkness. All was bright and cheerfnl within. He had lighted the low student lamp and was arranging his papers in a particularly happy frame of mind. He had little doubt what Helen's answer would be. He knew he had no rival in her affection, and the very best and most modest of men have just enough self-conceit to feel very safe in regard to the woman they love if there is no one else in the field. It is asking altogether too much to expect them to doubt for a moment that a woman would prefer living with some man, who was in every way congenial to her, to a life of celibacy, and the thought did not occur to Phillip Latimer. He felt that he and Helen Rand were as companionable as a man and woman could well be. They agreed on all the important and disputed questions of the day. She looked upon him as her

guide and teacher in all ethical and religious questions; and under the influence of her pure and gentle womanhood he was proud to acknowledge that his ideas of woman and woman's work had been slowly but surely attuned to her own. He felt for her that peculiar love which attaches one human being to another where there has been an interchange of intellectual help. He knew and felt proud to remember, that it was his lectures, delivered for so many years before a handful of people, which had brought peace and comfort to her tortured mind, tossed about on the sea of doubt, when the old theological landmarks had been torn away. There was no pride of intellect about Phillip Latimer, and he felt equally proud and grateful to remember that it was through Helen's forcible reasoning and even more through her forcible example, that he had learned to place woman, where every noble man loves to place her, on an equality with himself.

As his thoughts passed from Helen to his work they were equally pleasant. On his desk lay before him his last Sunday's lecture printed

in full in the leading daily paper. This was the first time he had seen his own words smile back at him just as he had delivered them, and it was surely pardonable in him if he looked at them with a little feeling of pride. He tried to think humbly of the large audiences which had been greeting him for the last few months and to attribute them to the general unrest of the public mind on religious topics; but it was expecting too much of human nature. He could not help comparing them with the small band of earnest men and women which had been his sole audience for nearly five years, with a stray convert now and then. For some unaccountable reason, the daily papers had taken a notion to mention his lectures favorably during the past few months, and as soon as the dear public knew of him, the dear public did him the honor to come and hear, and having heard, a sufficient number came again to swell his audience an hundred fold. He had come to the city almost unknown; he had undertaken a work always tedious and unremunerative, to break down a popular religion and put a new one in its place.

His adherents had been for the most part poor, struggling like himself to make an honest living without bowing down to the images worshiped by the crowd; doctors who were attempting that difficult task of building up a practice without "church influence;" teachers who could not be trusted in our public schools for fear they would teach infidelity; merchants who would not sit in the synagogues and consequently did not have the confidence of their fellow men; these, with a few struggling artists and musicians made up, for years, his congregation. It was certainly pardonable then in even a modest man to feel some pride in having captured the public at last against such fearful odds. He did not feel, as many of our philosophers and moralists have felt, a contempt for that unknown quantity called "the public;" nor, strange to say, did he for one moment think that there was any danger of his losing the popularity which had come to him so late. He felt a genuine interest in each and every human being who had ever listened to his words, and his confidence in the beauty and

truth of his own belief was so great that he doubted not for a moment that he must be able to convince all who would but listen to him. Nor was this a matter of conceit with him. He had given up a handsome salary in an orthodox church, where a congregation was always assured him, to assist a few earnest souls to spread what he considered the only truth, for a compensation which barely assured him a living. His conceit, if conceit it must be called, was pardonable on account of his overweening faith in his work and the good it was to do mankind.

Not the least pleasant of his musings centered in a check which lay upon his desk. It represented the large increase in his salary which had been voted him at the last business meeting of the society. Among the new members were a number of wealthy men, who, however sincere their conversion to the liberal faith might be, could not accept a cheap religion, and insisted upon putting Professor Latimer on a financial equality, at least, with the other moral leaders of the city. It was five times the amount he had been receiving all these eight

years, and he smiled contentedly to himself as he wondered what he and Helen would do with it. She had her own independent income and he had lived comfortably on his former salary, so the majority of it could go back into the society; and what a comfort it would be to have plenty of money to carry on the kindergarten and the district nursing, his two pet projects.

So deeply was Phillip immersed in his thoughts that the landlady had rapped twice before he realized that some one was seeking to gain admittance. He opened the door and received a card, which read: "Dr. Kate Sommerville." He looked at the card and then at his watch—nine o'clock. What could Dr. Sommerville want of him at this late hour, and on such a stormy night? It must be something important; perhaps she brings Helen's answer. But no; Helen would do nothing of the kind. He hesitated a moment; then said to the waiting landlady: "Please show the lady to my study." He stood at the door, card in hand, while Kate mounted the stairs. He was too well-bred to show any surprise at her visit and

held out his hand with his usual pleasant smile of welcome. But there was no answering smile from Kate as she bade him good evening, and one glance at her face told Phillip that she brought him bad news.

"Will you not take a seat by the grate, doctor? I imagine it is cold out tonight."

"Thank you, I am not cold and prefer to stand. My errand is short and as it is late I will not intrude upon your time longer than is necessary. Dr. Rand has sent you a message by me."

She was looking him full in the face and even in her excitement noticed the sudden change in his countenance. He said nothing, but stood in a respectful listening attitude. Kate spoke as by a mighty effort:

"She has told me of your letter to her and has bid me tell you that little Paul—is—her—own—child."

He looked at her at first, dazed, as if he had no comprehension of what she had said, then as the full meaning of her words came over him he clutched the back of a chair before him

so hard that the veins stood out in his forehead, and gazed at her speechless. They stood thus for one moment looking at each other in silence; Kate in the defiant attitude of a lioness waiting only for the attack of the enemy to defend her young; Phillip like one turned to stone. His thoughts would not come; he opened his lips but no word issued from them. At last he said in a husky voice:

"Have you nothing further to say to me—is that all your message?"

"It is all intrusted to me by Dr. Rand, but I have this further to say to you, Phillip Latimer: that in my eyes Helen Rand is as pure as the day she lay in her mother's arms, a new-born babe; that in all this broad land there is no truer, nobler, purer woman than she."

Phillip tried to listen patiently, but there had never been any sympathy between himself and Dr. Sommerville and her words irritated him. Who should know better than he Helen's worth? As Kate finished speaking, he said proudly:

"It is unnecessary to praise Dr. Rand to me."

"Pardon me, I too love her," and before

Phillip could apologize or make a move to stop her, Kate had said "good evening," and closed the door behind her.

CHAPTER IX.

PHILLIP stood with bowed head where Kate had left him. As a mighty river, stopped at some point in its course for a time, rushes on more furiously when the levee is broken, so his thoughts, momentarily checked by Kate's words, rushed back with renewed energy.

"That beautiful boy then is what the world calls an illegitimate child; and Helen"—he would not finish the sentence even in his own thoughts. Why had she chosen to tell him in this way? Why had she not written him? If she had only sent for him to come to her and herself told him the whole story. He knew in some way she must be innocent; it all happened while she was very young; Paul was nearly fourteen. In quick succession, scene after scene with Helen and the boy passed through his mind. He had been very fond of little Paul, and had taken a great interest in his education; the boy was he knew very much attached to him. At first his heart was filled with pity for

Helen and her child; then lover like, he fell to pitying himself. What irony of fate that this trouble had come upon him just at this time when he was happier than ever in his life before. But why grieve? They had but to accept the fact both of them and help each other to bear the burden of the knowledge of it. What did it matter after all what experiences she had passed through, if they had developed her into the grand woman she now was? He would go to her and take her in his arms and together they would defy the whole world if it should ever become known. He loved her and she was good and true. The thought that she loved him or she would never have revealed to him her life's secret, made him feel the strength of a giant. Yes, she loved him and for that very reason would not bring any influence to bias his decision in the light of the message she had sent him. She had told him nothing of her story; nothing which could excuse herself or work upon his sympathy. She was too proud to plead for herself and had sent him only the bare fact. The noble girl—how she

must have suffered! He would go to her to-morrow; he would show her that his love for her was founded upon a rock and could not be moved. As he roused himself to continue his evening's work, almost happy in his determination, his eye fell upon the manuscript of his unfinished lecture. For the first time the thought of his work in connection with his marriage with Helen flashed upon him. The possibility that he might be contemplating a marriage which in the future might ruin his entire life-work, made his head reel. He could look past Helen's history to the woman as he found her today, but could the world? If it should ever become known would his people uphold him in the step he was contemplating, or would they consider him a traitor to the cause of which they had made him their leader? Had he really a moral right to place the interests of his people in the hands of a woman who, according to them, had broken a moral law? He felt like a traitor to Helen for looking at her from their standpoint, but he was determined, he said to himself, to do the right in this

matter if he tore out his own heart. Every ignominy which orthodoxy could heap upon his work he had borne, but in spite of all it had grown from a weak plant to a strong tree, and he saw opening before him a limitless vista of good results from his hard work. If now he were to ignore the voice of his people in this matter, might they not refuse to be led in their moral life by a man who had disregarded a civil law? He argued first on one side and then on the other, until it seemed as if his brain were on fire. Was he a monster of injustice, he asked himself one moment, and the next feared in his selfish love for Helen he would prove a traitor to his work. He could decide nothing. He tried to write on his unfinished lecture, but in vain. He glanced impatiently at the little clock ticking away so contentedly in the corner. Two o'clock—impossible! His watch said the same. What had he been doing? It seemed only a few minutes since Dr. Sommerville left his study. Almost in despair he threw himself down on his couch and from sheer exhaustion fell into a restless sleep.

CHAPTER X.

KATE hurried out of the house and into the dark streets, scarcely noticing the way she took so her steps were directed toward home. A light snow was just beginning to fall. She turned her face up to the dark sky, in which there was no ray of light, and the white flakes fell with a refreshing coolness upon her flushed cheeks. Bitter thoughts chased each other in rapid succession through her mind. Nothing but darkness everywhere; the blind leading the blind, and all groping in the dark. Nowhere a certain moral guide, and everywhere injustice. What right has one human being to judge another? Who possesses the infallible scales of justice? What makes an act pure or impure, just or unjust? The social virtues of one century have proven to be the sins of the next, and still men continue to judge in the same dogmatic manner as they did a thousand years ago. For many hundreds of years the Christian world has been professing to follow him who said: "He that is without sin

among you, let him first cast a stone at her;" and his followers are as ready today to stone the woman, as when the gentle Nazarene lived and taught.

It was evident that Phillip Latimer, the flower of modern thought, a man as far in advance of the popular religion of today as Jesus was in advance of the religion he worked so hard to overthrow—was not entirely freed from the superstitions of the past in regard to woman. Was it impossible for men to learn justice? For centuries they have been trying to solve the question of the relation of the sexes, and every solution thus far has ignored entirely the one most vitally concerned, the child. In all our marriage laws, civil and religious, no thought is given to the helpless, innocent beings who are the chief sufferers under the law. The child of an unlawful union is branded illegitimate and a stigma put upon him from birth; the child born in so-called lawful wedlock may inherit passions and diseases for which there is no cure. The love-child born without spot or blemish is an unholy thing;

but the unwelcome child of a loveless union, filled with a loathsome disease and debasing passions, it may be, is a *legitimate* product, because forsooth a priest of some religion has mumbled a few words over the man and woman who produced this being. It is, according to our laws, a perfectly legitimate thing for criminals, idiots, lunatics and all sorts of moral and physicial monstrosities to reproduce their kind, so it be under the sanction of the law. It is the one unpardonable sin, on the part of the woman, to bring into the world a being, however perfectly developed mentally and physically, if without the sanction of Church or State. But what right has the Church or State, composed entirely of men, to make laws for women—above all moral law? What right have men to make laws whereby women are disgraced and children rendered homeless, through an act by which they suffer not at all? What right have men to make laws whereby they, with perfect impunity, may take advantage of a woman's love and trust, and then condemn her forever for loving and trusting? In a world filled with

hatred, jealousy, malice, envy, distrust, injustice of every description, lo! the greatest of crimes is to have loved too well, to have trusted too much. It is no crime to starve the bodies and souls of helpless women and children; no crime for man to fatten on the life-blood of his brother man; no crime for men and women to so abuse their bodies as to fill our land with asylums, hospitals and poor-houses; no crime to produce human beings condemned to carry through life a loathsome disease, a horror to themselves and society. There is pardon and charity for all but the woman and her love-child; they are forever lost; the one has fallen, the other may never rise. A woman like Helen impure! Little Paul a perversion of nature! It seemed so monstrous she could have cried aloud in her indignation. The poet is right; justice has grouped her way among us all these weary years blindfolded; Truth, too hideous for the light, has refused to be seen of men. But the time has come when the eyes of Justice must be stripped of their bandage, and Truth must be dragged out into the light.

Helen was pure and good. Little Paul with his healthy body and sound mind was not an illegitimate product of nature. As the lights of Helen's home glistened in the darkness before her, she registered a solemn vow.

"O, my sweet friend," she said, half aloud, "pure as the angels in heaven; from this hour my every effort shall be to make you pure before the civil law, as you have always been before the great moral law."

She mounted the steps with a lighter heart than she had known for many a day. "I am strong," she thought, "my money and time are my own and I can do it. The women will understand I am sure, and will help me;" and with a sudden thought, "he shall help me too. How better can he use his time and fortune than to make his sister a happy woman again? Poor Helen, if she could only see it all as I do!"

CHAPTER XI.

NOT finding Helen in the office Kate went to her room and knocked gently. No response, perhaps she has fallen asleep, she was so tired. She opened the door with a beating heart, longing yet dreading to meet her. But the room was empty and the gas turned low. She descended the stairs to enquire of the maid if Helen was out, when she noticed a light in the library. Helen was waiting for her there she thought; strange she did not hear her when she came in. She opened the door in her quick business-like way, but stopped abruptly as she saw seated by the library table, reading, not Helen but her brother.

Jack jumped up when he saw Kate and begged her to enter.

"Excuse me, I had no idea of finding you here."

"A very disagreeable surprise, no doubt."

Kate ignored his remark and added: "I am looking for Helen; do you know where she is?"

"Yes, I met her as I came in, hurrying off to answer an urgent call. She looked so tired I tried to persuade her not to go, to send some one else, but she insisted she must go herself."

"I am sorry she felt obliged to go. She is really not able to work. I was just about to say when you interrupted me so ungraciously that I was glad to see you. I had just been thinking of you."

"Had you, really," said Jack, much pleased at this concession on Kate's part. "A clear case of occult science—I was just thinking of you."

Kate laughed, "I wanted to talk with you about Helen." Jack's countenance fell. "She is not well and needs a vacation and I want you to pick her up bodily and carry her off somewhere for a few days."

"I should be delighted, I am sure, but I have noticed that my sister is not a woman to be disposed of so easily; she may have her own ideas on the subject."

"Exactly; and that is the reason I want your help; if it was an easy matter I could manage it alone."

"Command me," said Jack, with a stage flourish.

"Thank you." Kate laughed nervously and turned to leave the room.

"Don't go," said Jack, "take the easy chair and talk to me awhile. I've got the blues and can't get interested in my reading."

"I will be poor company, then," answered Kate, "for I am tired and cross myself."

"Well then, stay and let me cheer you up; it always cures me of the blues to see any one else blue."

"*Similia similibus*," said Kate, laughing. She threw herself in the easy chair Jack had drawn up to the grate. This was, after all, a relief from her own thoughts and she did not wish to retire until Helen returned.

"I have been wanting a talk with you for several days," began Jack, "but had despaired of bringing it about. You are always so desperately busy with your round of societies and clubs. You will excuse me for saying it, but I never saw any man work so hard to make money as you do to spend yours."

Kate sighed. "Your remedy for the blues is heroic. I am glad I haven't a complication of disorders, or I am afraid your treatment would prove fatal."

"You can laugh, but I am in earnest. It drives me to desperation never to be able to have any serious talk with you alone. Of course you will call me a fool and I know it myself, but I have determined to tell you that I love you and ask you to be my wife. I know well what you will say but so long as I am sure I have no rival I will not despair of winning you some day."

He had not moved from his seat and now looked over at her for the first time. He had never seen but one side of Kate's nature. He had been attracted to her by her physical beauty, her strong mental characteristics and the genial, hearty *camaraderie* which she showed in her intimacy with men and women alike. Her utter indifference to him as a possible lover had no doubt strengthened his determination to win her. He was startled as he met her gaze; her great black eyes were bent full

upon him and the fire from the grate gave them an added brilliancy.

"Mr. Rand, you are mistaken; I have no disposition to call you a fool for what you have just said to me. Do you think women like myself have no heart, no feeling? You have paid me the highest tribute a man can pay a woman and I assure you I can appreciate it. I believe you to be an honest, true man and that I cannot and do not return your love, is not because I do not appreciate your worth. But you are mistaken when you say you have no rival, for your rival is the most dangerous one a man can have—a life work. There is in my life no room for such a love as you would offer me. Not that I despise it; on the contrary I consider a true love between a man and woman the most ennobling of all sentiments; but before such a love came into my life the wrongs and injustices of my own sex had taken such a hold upon my very being, that my every thought, waking and sleeping, is for them. My time, my money, my talents, whatever they may be, I have dedicated to the cause of an oppressed class, and when I

tell you that I have no time for other interests it is literally true."

Kate had spoken earnestly and rapidly and Jack had no answer ready. Here was this young woman in an entirely new light. He had flattered himself that he understood her, but his idea of her was as different from the reality as day from night. He bowed his head upon his hand to gain time; he felt instinctively that he must think rapidly to argue his case at all.

"Granted all you have said, Dr. Sommerville, but might not a man interested like yourself in public work and especially in securing to women and children their rights, be a help to you instead of a hindrance? Could we not together accomplish more than you could alone? I hope you believe me honestly interested in the noble work I find you and my sister Helen engaged in."

"Indeed, I do, Mr. Rand, believe thoroughly in your honesty of purpose, and Helen and I are counting much on your help this winter, but I assure you my work and above all my thoughts, are in a direction which precludes my doing

my duty as a wife and mother. It is not that I despise such a position, but I have too high a regard for motherhood to enter that profession with my hands and heart devoted to another cause."

"But Helen has been filling the position of a mother all these years in which she has been practicing her professsion and doing public work besides."

"Ah, yes, I grant you there are a few rare women like Helen, with great executive ability and a trained judgment, who can carry successfully several different interests, but I am not one of them. I am one idead, and know too well my own limitations. There are times when it actually irritates me to have patients come in my office when some public measure is on my mind. I have even thought seriously of giving up my medical work, to have all my time and thought for the work which lies nearer my heart. So you see, Mr. Rand, I could really not think for a moment of taking up another profession when I am anxious to get rid of the one I have."

Kate shot at him a merry glance, but it was lost on him this time. He was thinking too seriously. He saw that it was useless to argue longer with her now. He honestly admired and respected her. If he could not be her lover he must be her friend, he thought, and having gained her friendship he need not despair of winning her some day. Jack Rand was a man of the world and knew that the next sentence would seal his fate. He said quietly:

"Dr. Sommerville, I two can appreciate what you have said to me. Let it be so then. I may not hope to make you my wife, but may I not bear the proud title of your friend? Will you not let me help you in the good work you are doing?"

Kate jumped up and held out her hand to him.

"Most gladly, you cannot know how we need the help and counsel of good honest men."

He rose and took her hand in his strong grasp and held it for a moment without speaking. He had never felt so proud in his life.

"You know I have decided to take up the

law, in case I am not too old to learn," he said, smilingly, "and a knowledge of the law, together with a good-sized bank account, may make me of some value in your work."

Kate had retreated a few steps and was leaning against the mantel. Jack saw that she intended to stand and moved to the other end of the mantel, where he could look at her across the firelight.

"Mr. Rand," said Kate, suddenly, "you have tonight talked to me in a way which proves your confidence in me. I believe you to be a good man, and as I have noticed many times your interest in children, I dare to ask your aid in a special work to which I am pledged; to secure a law which shall protect little children from being turned adrift on the world without home or parents; to secure to every child its inalienable birth-right, a father's name and a mother's care; in a word, to make it impossible for a child to be illegitimate and to make motherhood always sacred. There can be no such thing as an illegitimate child. What a travesty of justice to place a stigma on an un-

born human being! Behold the picture: The woman stands alone, an outcast forever from all that woman holds most dear, and her child from the moment he shall open his innocent eyes to the light of day must bear the mark of sin upon his forehead; himself guiltless he must make this struggle for existence with the finger of scorn ever pointed toward him. And this is what men call justice!"

To say that Jack was astonished and interested would but mildly express his state of mind. As Kate proceeded he leaned forward as if to catch the full meaning of every word. Her cheeks were all aglow, her eyes sparkled with the intensity of her feeling, and her auditor felt the fervor of her indignation and said, excitedly:

"Monstrous, indeed," and then checked himself, as if half ashamed of his own feeling and said more quietly, "but I had never thought of it in that light before. How will you remedy this injustice?"

"By legalizing these marriages," continued Kate, more calmly, "They are marriages be-

fore the great moral law; a hundred priests could not make them more binding. What more solemn pledge can a man and woman give of their love than to bring into the world a human being? Let men and women know that parentage marries them before God and man; let them know that the laws of property and inheritance bind them as strongly as though they were married by priest or clerk. This law alone can do justice to the innocent child; make it impossible for a woman to be betrayed and blot out forever that odious word 'bastard.'"

As the full meaning of Kate's words dawned upon him a suspicion flashed through his mind which made him scrutinize more closely the countenance of the earnest woman before him. She spoke with so much feeling; was it probable she would feel so deeply if stirred by no personal experience? But the next moment he was ashamed of the thought. It was impossible he said to himself, that one should plead so openly, so frankly and with no embarrassment whatever in word or act if a thought of self was the motive for her speaking. Clearly he had done

her a great injustice to allow the faintest suspicion to cross his mind, and his contrition made his voice very sympathetic as he answered:

"I believe you are right, doctor; I have myself often thought how unjust public opinion was toward women in this regard, and have wondered that they did not rebel against such injustice, but could never see any way to change it. I don't know as I quite understand you. You hold that parentage implies and presupposes marriage; the twain become one flesh in the child; they are married; let society recognize the fact and the State ratify it. Am I correct?"

"That is my position exactly."

"Undoubtedly this would be well for the child, and the tendency of the age is to readjust the world to the interests of childhood. But how would this law apply in the case of those who would find themselves twice married perhaps."

"It would apply," said Kate, emphatically,

"by proclaiming them bigamists and making them subject to the laws of bigamy."

"Ah, I see your point now, it is all in the interest of the child."

"Certainly. Whose rights should be protected if not those of the unconscious beings brought into existence without their knowledge or consent?"

"But would not this view of marriage be putting it on a lower plane; be in fact robbing it of that high meaning which it possesses for a refined nature?"

"You must remember," answered Kate, "that I am speaking only of a civil marriage, of a recognition of a contract by the State. It may be that over that higher marriage, the union of souls, the meeting of two minds which affords to both the highest intellectual companionship, the State should have no jurisdiction. There are those who claim that the obligation of the parents to the child is the only moral question involved in the relation of the sexes of which the State has a right to take cognizance. When the relations of two people, be they of the

same or of the opposite sex, do not in any way affect another, it is not clear in my mind that the State has the right of interference with personal liberty; but when two people have brought into the world a human being they are no longer free agents; they have given hostages to the child and to the State, of which the child is an integral part, from which no power in heaven or earth can release them. No; I see no other way out of the dilemma; unless, indeed, it were to make all children wards of the State and to abolish civil marriage altogether. If the State recognizes for itself any rights whatever over the relation of the sexes, it must acknowledge parentage as one, and indeed the principal cause for the existence of a civil marriage contract."

It would have been no doubt highly entertaining to a third party, to have witnessed the gradual change of this conversation from an impassioned declaration of love to a philosophical discussion of one of the gravest and most perplexing of social problems. It is safe to say that both Kate and Jack had forgotten

for the moment the scene which preceded the present conversation. They were both fond of discussion and Kate's enthusiasm and earnestness on this subject had carried Jack with her by a force he was powerless to resist. There was a perceptible silence after Kate's last sentence—when Jack said suddenly and with a grimace, as if the thought had just occurred to him:

"It would leave the odds a trifle in favor of the women!"

Kate laughed outright. They were not accustomed to such serious talks together and the whole evening had been a hard one for her. She had been on a severe nervous strain before meeting Jack. She had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and the comical side of her evening's experience now occurred to her for the first time.

"I admit it," she said, "but being a woman I am naturally a little prejudiced. Besides would there not be poetic justice in this, considering the multitude of women whose wrongs can now never be righted? The ghosts of a

thousand Hesters would rise up to acquit us of any injustice to the men."

"Do you realize, I wonder," said Jack, meditatively, "what a gigantic work you have undertaken? Imagine what a revolution such a law would make in society. You will have to fight the superstitions of ages and the Church will be no doubt the first to object."

"Yes, I realize all that; but surely there are true men and women enough who have thought on this subject to see the justice of it."

"I don't know," said Jack, doubtfully, "but at least you can count on me. If it cannot be accomplished the object is great enough to fight for in vain. But hark! there is Helen; can we not talk it over with her? She will agree with us, of course."

"Hush, no," said Kate hurriedly, as Helen entered.

"Back, Helen? How tired you look."

"Yes." she answered wearily, "I am tired. Alice died tonight at the hospital and she clung to me so I was obliged to stay with her to the last. She died with her little babe in her arms

and with her last breath was moaning: 'What will become of my child; who will care for it'? She refused absolutely to tell the name of its father and there is nothing to do, I suppose, but to send the poor little thing to the Foundling's Home."

She looked at her auditors, surprised at their solemn faces. Surely Kate was used to such stories.

"Pardon me, it is late and you too must be tired, Kate; why did you wait up for me? I should not bring you home such doleful tales. I am so sorry, Jack, that I was not able to stay home with you tonight. You know professional women are never to be relied upon for company. I am going to be very ungracious, too, and leave you after you have been so good as to wait up for me. Good night."

Kate followed her to her room.

"You saw him, Kate?"

"Yes."

For the first time in their entire intimacy Kate felt ill at ease in the presence of her friend. She knew not what to say. Helen was

so strong it seemed presumption to pity her. She had not asked for sympathy.

"I only staid a few moments. Oh, Helen, I am afraid you chose a poor messenger. It was a great shock to him."

"Yes, I knew it would be. Good night, dear; I have a busy day tomorrow and must try and sleep," and Helen passed quickly into her room.

CHAPTER XII.

THE powers of unrest had taken possession of Dr. Helen's little household. Kate seated herself at the low window in her own room and looked out vacantly into the darkness. It seemed impossible for her to fix her mind on any particular scene of the many in which she had been an actor during that eventful day. It was as if she had been through so many phases of life during the last twenty-four hours that no connected train of thought could establish itself in her mind. Every once in a while she would hear light noises in Helen's room, and it was long after midnight when she heard Jack stealing quietly up the stairs to his room. After a time all was silent, and still she remained at the window with no thought of sleep and seemed to herself not really awake. At last faint streaks of light appeared on the horizon, struggling with the darkness, as if the spirits of good and evil were contending for the mastery. Kate seemed dimly conscious that the night

was over but felt no inclination to arouse herself. Suddenly a bright gleam of light shot into the room directly in her eyes and at the same moment there flashed through her mind these words: "Helen cannot marry Phillip Latimer; according to your own theory she is already married." She jumped up and put her hands to her head; she felt so strangely; had she been asleep? No; she was sure she had not slept and yet she was conscious that this was the first connected sentence which had been in her mind since she threw herself in the chair. Her thoughts came fast enough now. Helen was already married; that was plain; but why had she not realized it before? She grew almost angry with herself at her own stupidity. Then the possible conclusions, to which she might be forced from this standpoint, rushed through her mind with lightning rapidity. Would the moral law forbid a second marriage? Had then the state no right to annul a marriage which the higher law of justice had sanctioned? Justice to the child certainly demanded that parentage should be recognized as marriage under the law;

but on the other hand the right of the child to be well-born must demand that marriage should not always mean parentage. She rebelled at the thought of being forced to view marriage from that standpoint; but turn where she would for arguments against her own position, she could see nothing but the sad faces of myriads of innocent little children pleading with Church and State for a father's name and a mother's love.

The sudden noise which she made in rising from her chair penetrated to Helen's room, and a moment later there was a light tap at the door and Helen entered. "I heard you moving around, Kate, and dared to come and beg a little talk with you; may I come in?"

She stood in her long white wrapper in the door way, a background of darkness revealing more perfectly her pale sweet face, and as she turned toward the window the faint streaks of light from the rising sun seemed to throw a halo around her.

Kate looked at her for a moment with a feeling almost of awe, then rousing herself she

stretched out her arms to her. "Certainly, dear friend, you can never come to me when I am not longing to see you. I have been thinking only of you."

"Oh! Kate, you should not allow my clouded life to darken yours. I sometimes wonder if I have any right to accept all your sympathy and love and allow you to bear such a large part of my burden."

"Helen, I beg you will not harbor such a thought. You give me the rarest thing on earth, a perfect confidence, a true friendship. There can be no such thing as a balance of obligation on either side. Our interests are one; neither of us can help bearing the burdens and sharing the pleasures of the other. But have you not slept?"

"No, but I have solved the problem, Kate, and my mind is at rest; I cannot marry Phillip Latimer."

Kate started; the identical words she had heard only a moment ago. She said nothing and Helen continued:

"I feel that my duty to my child forbids it; I

could not live if I thought any action of mine would ever cause him to say: 'Mother, you have been untrue to me.' The time will come when he must know our true relation; and God speed the day when he shall be old enough to understand. It is this concealment which has seemed to me at times would break my heart; if it were not for my public work I could not have borne it. Those who give me so much credit for bearing the burdens of others little know that only so can I bear my own. Kate, if in every way I have conserved the interest of my child; if my every thought and action have been with reference to my obligations to him, then shall I not need to fear his judgment on that day when he shall know the truth. But you are silent, Kate; do you not think I am right?"

As Helen proceeded many emotions had been raised in Kate's mind; joy at Helen's decision, and at the fact that she had arrived at this conclusion so soon and without knowing Phillip's decision; pity for the woman compelled to live over again in a single night the agony of years; a delight which she could not repress, that their

own relation was not to be disturbed. She tried to answer calmly, but her voice trembled.

"I believe you are right, Helen. As long as our laws are so unjust and put upon children like little Paul an added burden to bear through life, you who brought him into the world have an added responsibility over other mothers. You will not mind my saying this much, dear Helen; and I do not believe you have anything to fear from telling Paul the truth. He is a noble boy, far maturer than his years would warrant, and I am confident that the knowledge of your suffering would but bring to the surface all the wealth of tenderness within him, and make him prize the more the devotion you give him."

"I felt sure you would agree with me, Kate. Phillip Latimer is, I am sure, good and true; but it is expecting too much of human nature, that he should look upon Paul as his own child if other children came. I have all my life guarded his interests so jealously that I do not dare to trust myself in the relations into which this marriage might bring me. In my pro-

fessional work I have seen too many failures in attempting to join families not related by blood. It is very clear to me now that it is my child's right to demand of me an undivided interest and attention. I have no moral right to put myself in any position where there is danger that his rights may be trampled on."

She had seated herself by the window in a chair facing Kate. As she ceased speaking her drooping attitude and pale face showed to the professional eye of her friend the complete mental and physical exhaustion the night of self-communion had produced. Kate jumped up and raised her gently in her arms:

"And now to sleep, my dear; you have made a noble decision and I cannot allow you to say another word until I see a brighter look in those tired eyes."

"Yes, Kate, I will sleep now; and you?"

"I, too, will rest."

When she had seen Helen to her room, she snatched her wraps and stole quietly down the stairs, and out into the glorious day which was breaking. The light snow-fall of the evening

before had cleared the atmosphere and left that crisp feel to the air which sends the blood tingling through all the veins. The old sun glittered and danced on the fresh fallen snow, as if beside himself with joy at the sight of something so pure. Kate breathed in the beautiful scene, and seemed to herself to be walking on air; not one feeling of weariness—she was not to lose Helen after all. It might be selfish, but it was human nature. She knew she could make Helen happy and now she was to have a chance to do so; she felt so sure that Helen had made the wisest decision. As she returned to her room after a brisk walk, and noticed in the mirror her own sparkling eyes and cheeks aglow, she laughed aloud:

"I certainly don't look like one who has watched out the night," she thought. "I believe, after all, I must have slept."

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